

REMARKS

This Amendment and Reply is intended to be completely responsive to the Non-Final Office Action mailed July 7, 2010. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present Application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow. Claims 13-18, 21, 22 and 28-32 have been canceled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits. Claims 19, 20, 23-25 and 27 have been amended. New Claims 33-37 have been added to provide claims of varying scope. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, Claims 19, 20, 23-27 and 33-37 will be pending in the present Application upon entry of this Amendment and Reply.

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

Drawing Objections

On page 2 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner alleged that Figure 1 should be amended to include a designation of "Prior Art." In response, Applicants have amended Figure 1 in accordance with the recommendation of the Examiner.

On pages 2-3 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(h)(3). Specifically, the Examiner alleged that the plane from which the cross-sectional view of Figure 6 has been taken is not indicated on the view from which the section is cut away by a broken line. In response, Applicants have amended Figure 3 to include a cut-line 6-6 to illustrate the plane from which the cross-sectional view of Figure 6 has been taken.

On pages 3-4 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner also objected to the drawing under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(5) because "they include the following reference character(s) not mentioned in the description: 22." In response, Applicants have amended Figure 1 by removing reference numeral 22.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections to the drawings.

Claim Objections

On page 4 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner objected to Claim 21 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. The Examiner noted that Claim 21 only sets forth limitations previously set forth in Claim 18, from which Claim 21 depends. In response, Applicants have canceled Claim 21 without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the objection to Claim 21 is now moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

On page 7 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner objected to Claims 23 and 24 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that such claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant thanks the Examiner for this notice of allowable subject matter.

Applicants have chosen to rewrite Claims 23 and 24 in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. Claims 19, 20 and 25-27 have been amended to now depend from independent Claim 23. New Claims 33-37, which correspond to Claims 19, 20 and 25-27, have been added to depend from independent Claim 24. Accordingly, Applicants request favorable consideration and allowance of independent Claims 23 and 24, and dependent Claims 19, 20, 25-27 and 33-37 as they depend there from.

Despite rewriting Claims 23 and 24 in independent form, Applicants wish to make it unmistakably clear that they do not agree to or acquiesce in the rejections of Claims 13-22 and 25-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) detailed below. Claims 23 and 24 have been rewritten in independent form only to obtain prompt allowance of claims reciting subject matter indicated as allowable by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 112

On page 4 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 28-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. On pages 5-6 of the Detailed Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 13-22 and 25-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,973,105 to Itou (“Itou”).

Applicants believe that these rejections are now moot. Claims 13-18, 21, 22 and 28-32 have been canceled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits. Further, as set forth above, Claim 23 has been rewritten in independent form and Claims 19, 20, 25-27 now depend there from. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 112.

* * *

Applicants respectfully submit that each and every pending rejection has been overcome, and that the present Application is in a condition for allowance. In particular, even when the elements of Applicants’ claims, as discussed above, are given a broad construction and interpreted to cover equivalents, the cited references do not teach, disclose, or suggest the claimed subject matter. Favorable reconsideration of the Application is respectfully requested.

Further, Applicants respectfully put the Patent Office and all others on notice that all arguments, representations, and/or amendments contained herein are only applicable to the present Application and should not be considered when evaluating any other patent or patent application including any patents or patent applications which claim priority to this patent application and/or any patents or patent applications to which priority is claimed by this patent application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to

Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, the Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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By /Adam M. Gustafson/

FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
Customer Number: 22428
Telephone: (414) 297-5652
Facsimile: (414) 297-4900

Adam M. Gustafson
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 54,601